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An Introduction To An Oriental Musical Instrument: Oud

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Abstract

The Oud is a stringed instrument that is well known in the Near East. It is mainly made of wood and it consists of a bowl, top, a finger board, pick guard, pegs, and a bridge.

The Oud is played by a special pick also called (reessa), which means *feather* in Arabic. This is because it used to be a feather of an eagle that was treated and used for that purpose.

Nowadays it made of different types of plastic.

The Oud has various methods of tuning. This is because many populations have adopted it. But the most famous tuning from bottom to top is (C4, G3, D3, A2, F2, C2).

Background

The Oud first appeared in Persia (Iran) in the 7th century CE, with the name (barbat) which means "wood."

Originally it was made of a skin top with a neck and two crescent-shaped sound holes and consisted of four pairs of strings.

Later on in Andalusia (Muslim Spain) the shape was different, it consisted of an added wooden rose cover for the holes which turned into circles. The most important development was by (Zeriyab an Iraqi Musician who went to Andalusia, and he added another string for the Oud).

From that moment on, the Oud has had five pairs of strings.

Famous Performers

From the beginning of the twentieth century, the Arab world, especially Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine had many virtuosos playing Oud such as Mohamed el-Qasabgi (1882 - 1966), Farid el-Atrash (1910 - 1974), Riad el-Sunbati (1906 - 1981), Rewhi el-Khames, Simon Shaheen (1955), and Ammar el-Sherei (1948 - 2012).

Let's focus on the Oud in Arabic Music



The Oud is still seen in Arabic Music ensembles but in a different shape.

Another type appeared recently which is the electric Oud.

References:

- Britannica. Oud, <https://www.britannica.com/art/oud>
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